

St. Panteleimon Orthodox Church

OCA - Diocese of the Midwest

Fr. Andrew Bartek, Rector V. Rev. Anthony Spengler, Attached

Protodeacon Robert Northrup Reader James Tilghman

Parish Council President: Nicholas Cavaligos



Sunday, September 18, 2016

Tone 4

Gospel: St. Matthew 21:33-42

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 16:13-24

13th Sunday After Pentecost / Leavetaking of the Elevation of the Cross

St. Eumenes, Bp. of Gortyna / Martyr Ariadne of Phrygia / Martyrs Sophia and Irene of Egypt / Martyr Castor of Alexandria

September Bulletin Sponsor

In Memory of Helene Flaherty by Mr. & Mrs. Paul Demkosky

Liturgical & Events Schedule

Sunday, September 18

9:10 am: Hours

9:30 am: D. L. / Mem Sunday / Molebian
for School Children / Social /
Church school

12:15 pm: Monthly Board Meeting

Monday, September 19

7:00 pm: Village Meeting

Tuesday, September 20

10:00 am: Deanery Meeting, Wheaton

Wednesday, September 21

7:30 pm: Bible Study

Saturday, September 24

5:00 pm: Great Vespers @ Burr Ridge followed by Fr. Juvenal's presentation on Guatemalan mission work

Sunday, September 25

9:10 am: Hours

9:30 am: D.L. / Social followed by Annual Meeting

SCRIPT PROGRAM UP & RUNNING

Who to see: Matushka Susan

When: 1st & 3rd Sundays of each month

- In order for the program to be cost effective for us, a minimum \$300 order must be placed.
- A list of participating businesses is available for your review.

This is a great way for you to do your regular shopping and it benefit your church! Try it out!

PAN-ORTHODOX CHOIR OF GREATER CHICAGO HOSTS AN EVENING OF SUPREME CHORAL CHAMBER MUSIC

St Petersburg, Russia internationally acclaimed Konevets Quartet will be in concert at St Peter & Paul in Burr Ridge.

Oct 1: 6:00pm Vespers 7:00pm Concert

Admission is free will appreciation

40 DAYS MEMORIAL

September 18: Olga Petrick

October 2: Fr. Paul Herbert & Victims of the earthquake in Italy

October 9: Firefighter John

Annual Parish Meeting

Mark your calendars!

Sunday, September 25

(following the Divine Liturgy)

Please make sure your financial obligations are met otherwise you will not be permitted to vote. (A member in good standing: **financially very bare minimum** is \$550 {\$176 required to be sent to the Diocese per adult 18 yrs & older [except those in college] plus a minimum of at least \$1 a day = \$550}).

Everyone has met their spiritual responsibilities.

Next week you will receive a package in the mail containing the minutes & reports from last fiscal year. & The 2017 Proposed Budget. Please review prior to the meeting & bring them to the meeting.

ALL DEPARTMENT HEADS

Everyone, please have written reports for the Annual Meeting: Choir, Church School, Sisterhood, Fundraising, etc

7549 West 61st Place, Summit, Illinois 60501

Rectory 708-552-5276 / Cell 570-212-8747

website: <http://www.saintpanteleimon.org/>

Webinar summarizing OCA Mission School to be held Tuesday, September 27

On Tuesday evening, September 27, 2016 the Diocese of the Midwest's Mission Committee will present a webinar summarizing the "Mission School" held by the Orthodox Church in America in 2015 and 2016.

Priest Weir, Rector of Saint Stephen Church, Crawfordsville, IN and a participant in the 2015 Mission School, will be the primary presenter. The session — free of charge and open to interested clergy and laity alike — will begin at 7:00 p.m. Central Time and will last approximately one hour. Advance [registration](#) is required.

"While no 60 minute session can convey the content of a week-long workshop, we hope to at least put down a foundation and offer some ideas for follow-up actions," said facilitator Joseph Kormos.

While primarily geared to members of the Diocese of the Midwest, faithful of other dioceses and jurisdictions are invited to participate.

St. Andrew Church, Maple Heights, OH raises funds for area outreach

Members of Saint Andrew Church here recently partnered with two local organizations — the Knights of Columbus and a boy scout troop — to host a fundraising dinner to aid local outreach programs and ministries.

"We are working hard with two other organizations in the area to reach out to the needy in our local community," said Christine Hoover, Saint Andrew Parish Council President. "This was a great event, and we were proud to have contributed."

A total of \$1,000.00 was raised to help Woman of Hope, Inc., an area organization selected as Saint Andrew Parish's "charity of choice."

"Women of Hope helps and supports homeless women veterans," Christine explained. "The organization recently purchased a home in our area and are working on fixing it up while seeking donations to house four women veterans who are homeless."

On Saturday, June 18, the faithful hosted a "house warming" during which the \$1,000.00 check was presented. "We will continue to partner with the Knights and boy scouts in an ongoing effort to support this charity," Christine added.

NEWS FROM AROUND THE DIOCESE

IOCC to sponsor Cleveland-area luncheon, fashion show and tea October 1

International Orthodox Christian Charities [IOCC] will host a high tea and fashion show at the Copper Stone Event Center, 4630 Ridge Road, Brooklyn, OH on Saturday, October 1, 2016.

The event will feature fashions by Christopher and Banks and Sword Furs. Doors open at 10:00 a.m. with lunch served at 11:30 a.m. The fashion show will begin at noon. Attendees also will have an opportunity to shop for artisan-crafted jewelry and fashion accessories and browse an assortment of gift baskets. Proceeds will benefit IOCC.

St. Paul Church, Dayton, OH to host exhibit of antique, contemporary icons October 14-16

Saint Paul Church here will host an icon exhibit — "Mary and the Saints: A Celebration of Eastern Orthodox Iconography" — Friday through Sunday, October 14-16, 2016.

The exhibit will open with a reception from 5:00 until 8:00 p.m. on Friday, October 14, at the church, which is located at 4451 Wagner Road, Dayton, OH. The exhibit will be open from 10:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. on Saturday and noon until 5:00 p.m. on Sunday. Self-guided and docent tours will be available.

"On exhibit will be over 75 rare icons of the Virgin Mary and other saints commemorated by Orthodox Christianity," said Archpriest Theodore Bobosh, Rector. "Taken from private collections across the US, the exhibition will include unique examples from 15th century Medieval Russia, 16th and 17th century Greece, and 19th century Imperial Russia, as well as contemporary icons painted in America. This is a singular opportunity to view prime examples of the spiritual art of the Eastern Orthodox Church as they were originally intended in their appropriate setting."

Prayers offered for 9/11 victims at St. Catherine Representation Church

MOSCOW, RUSSIA [OCA]: On Sunday, September 11, 2016, prayers were offered in all parishes of the Orthodox Church in America—including the [Church of the Great Martyr Catherine](#), Moscow—for those who lost their lives in the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

Saint Catherine's is the Representation Church of the Orthodox Church in America to the Moscow Patriarchate.

This year's commemoration coincided with the celebration of the Feast of the Beheading of Saint John the Baptist on the Julian Calendar, to which Archimandrite Alexander [Pihach], Saint Catherine's Dean and OCA Representative, drew appropriate comparisons in addressing the faithful.

Among those present during the Divine Liturgy and Memorial, celebrated in English and Slavonic by Father Alexander and the parish clergy, were Archimandrite Filaret [Bulekov], Deputy Chairman of the Department of External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate; Y. Matveyev of the North American Section of Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and representatives of the US and Canadian Embassies to the Russian Federation.

Following services in the church, the clergy, faithful and guests gathered in the courtyard, where a bell was rung 15 times to commemorate the number of years that have passed since over 3,000 individuals, including first responders, lost their lives in the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon and the airline crash in Stonycreek Township near Shanksville, PA. The commemoration ended with a moment of silence.

Metropolitan Tikhon attends lunch honoring WCC General Secretary

On Tuesday, September 6, 2016, His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon attended a lunch honoring the Rev. Dr. Olav Fykse Tveit, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, at the Chancery of the Northeast American Diocese of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, Muttontown, NY.

Hosting the gathering was His Grace, Metropolitan Zachariah Mar Nicholovos of the Northeast Diocese. A well known Norwegian theologian, Rev. Tveit was elected General Secretary of the WCC in August 2009 and has guided the organization since January 2010. He was re-elected to a second term in July 2014.

Metropolitan Tikhon and the attendees engaged in discussions on a wide variety of topics affecting Church life today.

Matushka Cecelia Burdikoff

SARATOGA SPRINGS, NY [OCA]: Matushka Cecelia [Clara] Burdikoff, 73, fell asleep in the Lord on Monday, September 12, 2016, at Saratoga Hospital here.

Born April 23, 1943 in Elyria, OH to John and Clara Pleska, she and her husband, Archpriest Igor Burdikoff, retired Rector of Christ the Saviour Church, Ballston Lake, NY, were married in Lorain, OH on December 27, 1964. During their 51 years of marriage, she devoted herself to the Orthodox faith serving as a choir director and Church school teacher and volunteering wherever she was needed. Her love for music enabled her to be an accomplished piano and accordion player and an amateur song and story writer.

Matushka Cecelia earned degrees from Bowling State University, Montclair University and SUNY Albany. Throughout her professional life, she worked as a teacher in Michigan, New Jersey, and New York. In her last position before retirement, she worked as a library specialist at Veeder Elementary School in the South Colonie, NY School District. She had been awarded a gramota by the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America for her steadfast loyalty and service to the Church.

Others present included His Grace, Dr. Youhanon Mar Demetrios, Metropolitan of the Delhi Diocese of the Malankara Church, Co-Secretary to the International Joint Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Oriental Churches; His Eminence, Archbishop Dr. Vicken Aykazian of the Armenian Apostolic Church, Moderator of the WCC Finance Committee; the Right Rev. Lohncy Itty, D. D., Ph.D., Episcopal Diocese of Long Island; Protopresbyter Leonid Kishkovsky, Director of External Affairs of the Orthodox Church in America, Former President of the National Council of Churches USA, and Former WCC Executive and Central Committee member; Rev. Irinel Racos, JUD, Chancellor of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Rockville Centre, NY; Mrs. Ann Glynn Mackoul of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America, WCC Executive Committee Member; and the Revs. Paulose T. Peter, Thomas Paul and M. K. Kuriakose, Director of Ecumenical Relations, Chancellor and Secretary respectively of the Northeast American Diocese.

**Reach for Life & Sound the Alarm on
Suicide “My Last Party” Stage
Production**

WHEN: Sunday, October 9

WHERE: Chicago Gaelic Park, 6119 West 147th, Oak Forest, IL 60452

6:00pm -7:15 pm VIP SEATING INCLUDES: \$45
Priority Seating / 3 course meal / non-alcoholic beverages / Macy’s shopping pass / Meet & Greet Writer & Director Michelamone

General Admission: \$25

Doors Open @ 7:30pm for general admission

Cash Bar until 8:00pm

For tickets: mylastparty.eventbrite.com

**2016 CHICAGO SYNERGY
ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM**

WHEN: Saturday October 15 from 9:00am -2:00pm

WHERE: St George Antiochian Orthodox Church, 1220 South 60th Court, Cicero, IL 60804

COST: \$40 per person in advance
\$50 at the door
Registration & payment prior to Oct 8: \$35.
Husband & wife couples \$50
High School & College Students \$25
Registration includes: coffee & lunch.

TOPIC: Holiness in Contemporary Culture by Hieromonk Alexii Altschul



9/11 Memorial attendees listen solemnly to the list of the fallen.

**Uncompromising Faith in
Compromising Times
By Fr. Evan Armatas
SATURDAY OCTOBER 22**

Where: St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church in Elmhurst, 893 North Church Rd., (60126)

Retreat Schedule:

10:30am: Registration & Fellowship
11:00am: Session 1: Elements of faith that Matter
12:30pm: Harvest of Plenty (aka Lunch)
1:15pm: Session 2 Walking & Standing in Faith

Reservations Required by Monday, October 17
(Cost: \$15) contact office @ 630-834-7010 or saintdemetriosoffice@gmail.com

Fr. Evan is the priest of St. Spyridon Church in Loveland, CO. He founded and manages the St. Nektarios Education Fund, www.snef.org, a non-profit student education program. Fr. Evan is the host of the podcast Transforming our Lives in Christ and the live call-in show Orthodoxy Live on Ancient Faith Radio. Visit ancientfaith.com to listen to his podcasts.

**Archangel Michael Church to host Seventh
Annual Fr. Vladimir Prislowsky Lecture
September 24**

Seraphim Danckaert, Director of Mission Advancement at Saint Tikhon’s Seminary, South Canaan, PA, will deliver the Seventh Annual Father Vladimir Prislowsky Lecture at Archangel Michael Church here on Saturday, September 24, 2016. The lecture and a light meal will follow the celebration of Great Vespers at 5:00 p.m.

In his presentation, “Why Young People Are Leaving The Orthodox Church And What To Do About it,” Mr. Danckaert will share insights based on various major studies with regard to raising children who continue to live their faith in adulthood. He also will offer practical steps to “make a difference” in the lives of children, grandchildren and the parish community.

Father Vladimir Prislowsky served as Rector of Archangel Michael Church for 37 years — from August 1933 until his repose in September 1970.

Prayer List

Prizsts: Anthony Spenglar, John Kuchta, Fr. James Gleason (*Fr.'s spiritual father*), ***Ted Bobosh**, ***Moses Berry**, John Duranko, Dean, Archimandrite Vladimir, ***Joseph Gibson**, ***Yves Babich**, * **Fr. Philip Lashbrook**, ***John Reeves**, ***Protodeacon Alexis**

Matushkii: ***Carol Janacek**, ***Christina Kolenda**, ***Barbara Matusiak**, **Mary Perez**, **Snezana Ruzic**, Pani Patricia Duranko

Parishioners: Karen Muzyka, Ronald Stachowiak, Rebecca Eggers, Sonja Harris, Pauline, Marilyn, Jason Kirnbauer

Parishioner's Friends / Family: Donna Parhas (*Nick's Cousin*), Mary Ann Magerko, John Magerko, Stephen Holly & Walter Litzie (*Fr.'s cousin*), George Cavaligos (*Nick's brother*), Christos Parhas (*Nick's cousin*), Constantine Cavaligos (*Nick's dad*), John Hartel (*Joann's Step-dad*), Sandra (*Karen's sister*), Erika Northrup, Mark Svara, Mary Northrup, Dianne Northrup, Raymond Northrup, Joey Krush, Carol Bregin (*Friend of Lynn*), Jan Kost (*Linda's sister*), Ann Lazo (*Friend of Lynn*), George Lazo (*Friend of Lynn*), Bruce (*Fr. Kurt's brother*), Vivian (*friend of Beccy Eggers*), June, James (*Hruban Family*), Tommy, Jimmy, (*Spengler Family*), Roger Seglem

Other Requests: Lucille (*Duke*), Dianne (*Bill Rudolph*), Elizabeth Lilos, Jemsey Pradun, Hermenegil (*Neighbor*), Lidiya (*Neighbor*), Cathleen Rebollar, Dianna Rudolph, Gloria Salgado (*Lynn's Friend*), ***John Sedor**, * **Daria Petrykowski**, ***Cynthia Koranda**, Jacob, Emilian, Joyce, John, Robert, William & Dana, Mark, Eve, Rebecca & her unborn baby, Michelle & her unborn baby

Military: Fr. Herman, Fr. Gregory, Amber, Caleb, Nicholas, David, Timothy, Robert, Kristen, Matthew, Brian, Daniel, Joseph

Captives: Metropolitan Paul (*Orthodox Archdiocese of Aleppo*), Archbishop John (*Syriac Archdiocese of Aleppo*)

For the UN & IOCC humanitarian aid workers in & around Syria / Those suffering persecution in Iraq, Syria, Israel, Egypt, Ukraine and throughout the world / Those held captive throughout the world.

Additions or removals from the list? Please notify Fr. Andrew.

(***Bishop Request**) : Off - Daniel Tiani (*friend of Beccy who reposed*)

1 Corinthians 16:13-24 (Sunday, Epistle)

Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong. Let all that you do be done with love. I urge you, brethren – you know the household of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints – that you also submit to such, and to everyone who works and labors with us. I am glad about the coming of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, for what was lacking on your part they supplied. For they refreshed my spirit and yours. Therefore acknowledge such men. The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Priscilla greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house. All the brethren greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss. The salutation with my own hand – Paul's. If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed. O Lord, come! The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Matthew 21:33-42 (Sunday, Gospel)

Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country. Now when vintage-time drew near, he sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit. And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did likewise to them. Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.' So they took him and cast him out of the vineyard and killed him. Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers? They said to Him, 'He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons.' Jesus said to them, 'Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD's doing, And it is marvelous in our eyes'?

S E P T E M B E R

BIRTHDAY	NAMES DAY	ANNIVERSARY
2- Jaxson Wolfe 3- Reader James Tilghman 4- Alice Sutko 6-Matushka Roberta 9- Braydan Grabavoy 9- Nicole Hruban 12- Alexis Northrup 16- Tommy Leonchik 29- John Magerko Sr.	9-9 His Beatitude, Met. Theodios <i>(retired)</i> 9-30 Archbishop Michael of New York / New Jersey	9-10-11 Andrei & Linda Davik 9-13-75 Protdeacon Robert & Matushka Susan Northrup 9-21-97 Vitaly & Karen Muzyka 9-23-07 Richard & Tanya Wolfe

If there are those names to be added or removed, please contact Fr. Andrew. He would like to list all members of your family Orthodox and non-Orthodox.

In blessed repose: S E P T E M B E R

3- Lyle Foraker (00) 3- Stella Gruener (07) 11-Elias Kotsones (14) 12- Anita Milosovic (14) 14-George Grabavoy (50) 15- Anastasia Barfomchik Gracios (84)	15- John Patrick (86) 22- William Nosek (99) 26- Andrew Sklar (86) 27- John Termin (87) 29- Alice Whitko Clinnin (83) 30- Bishop John Martin (84)	1954: Michael Tonrich Evdokim Sternik Katherine Fissiuk Steve Sterenchuk Gregory Demchik Demian Kuzmich Joseph Litrenchuk 1955: Joseph Drabino Melania Homko Jacob Kuzmich Timothy Savchuk Melania Genaliuk
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Remember those who have gone before us in prayer. If there is a name missing from the above list, please speak to Fr. Andrew to have them added.

Third Annual St. Macrina Orthodox Institute Conference held in August

The Midwest Diocese's Saint Macrina Orthodox Institute held its third annual diaconal and catechist conference at the new Saint Iakovos Retreat Center here August 12-13, 2016. This year the conference focused on all the ways that 'diakonia' connects us to charity and love of our neighbor," said Archpriest Elijah Mueller, Institute Director and Rector of Saint Makarios Mission, Hyde Park, Chicago. "The talks were lively and enjoyed by all, as were the diaconal liturgical practice and the catechists' practicum."

Archdeacon Kirill Sokolov facilitated the hands-on review of liturgical rubrics, while Anna Strelka lead the catechists through exercises and group discussion. His Grace, Bishop Paul, offered words of encouragement to the participants as they continue their studies.

Matushka Vera Proctor, Director of FOCUS Minnesota, delivered the keynote address, titled "The Myrrhbearers' Great Boldness in the Faith in Jesus Christ: As He Is, so are We in This World." The conference theme was further developed by Rebecca Luft, who spoke on "The Liturgy of Love of Your Neighbor: Commands of Law and Gospel," Dr. Eric Jobe, whose presentation was titled "Serving Tables: Diaconal Ministry in Liturgy and Charity in Ancient Israel and the Mediterranean World;" and Dr. Helen Theodoropoulos, offered a presentation titled "Modern Saints as Examples of Diakonia." Father Elijah also spoke on Byzantine philanthropy and the Fathers' preaching about poverty and wealth.

According to Father Elijah, the 2017 conference — "The Wedding Feast: Diakonia and the Celebration of Life in Union" — will focus on the Orthodox understanding of how marriage, asceticism and sacramental life unite in ministry.

Remembering 9/11: Fifteen years later

SYOSSET, NY [OCA]: Sunday, September 11, 2016, marks the 15th anniversary of the 9/11 terrorists attacks on New York City, Shanksville, PA, and Arlington, VA.

The day—and indeed the weekend ahead—remains one of particular prayer, reflection and repentance. Surely there is much upon which we might reflect and about which we might pray as the world continues to face conflicts that challenge us to maintain focus on “our true home,” the Kingdom of God, wondrously in our midst yet all-too-often overshadowed by this fallen world.

As we mark this somber anniversary, let us especially pray for those who lost their lives in the 9/11 attacks, as well as for their families and friends who continue to mourn the loss of those with whom, just one day earlier, they had walked and talked; for those who so selflessly reached out to victims and survivors alike on that tragic day; for those brave first responders—fire fighters and physicians, police and military personnel and officials, clergy and counselors and coworkers—who risked their “all” to bring comfort and hope to friend and stranger alike; and for everyone still struggling to “make sense” of that which, by nature, is senseless.

Among those who lost their lives on 9/11 and for whom we pray on this anniversary are two dozen Orthodox Christians, a list of whom has been compiled and maintained over the years. While the list may not be complete—if readers know of anyone whose name should be added to the list, please send it to info@oca.org—our Lord assures us that our prayers, even for those whose names have been forgotten or who are known to Him alone, will not go unanswered.

Let us especially remember our brothers and sisters in Christ, asking the One Who is our very Life and Resurrection to grant them eternal rest with the saints, that “they may shine like the stars of heaven” in the Kingdom of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit—the very Kingdom to which we all aspire.

Orthodox Christians known to have perished on September 11, 2001

“With the saints give rest, O Christ, to the souls of Thy departed servants, where there is neither sickness, nor sorrow, nor sighing, but life everlasting!”

Joanna Ahladiotis	Anastasios (Ernest) Alikakos	Alan Bondarenko	Katerina Bantis
Lt Peter (Panagiotis) Brennan	Anthony Demas	Kontantinos Ekonomos	Anna Fosteris
Peter Hansen	Vassilios Haramis	John Katsimatidis	Danielle Kousoulis
Eskedar Melaku	George Merkouris	Peter Constantine Moutos	James Nicholas Papageorge
George Paris	Theodore Pigis	Daphne Pouletsos	Anthony (Tony) Savas
Derek Statkevicius	Andrew Stergiopoulos	Michael Tarrou	Prokopios (Paul) Zois

The Universal Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross

Commemorated on [September 14](#)

The Elevation of the Venerable and Life-Creating Cross of the Lord: The pagan Roman emperors tried to completely eradicate from human memory the holy places where our Lord Jesus Christ suffered and was resurrected for mankind. The Emperor Hadrian (117-138) gave orders to cover over the ground of Golgotha and the Sepulchre of the Lord, and to build a temple of the pagan goddess Venus and a statue of Jupiter.

Pagans gathered at this place and offered sacrifice to idols there. Eventually after 300 years, by Divine Providence, the great Christian sacred remains, the Sepulchre of the Lord and the Life-Creat-ing Cross were again discovered and opened for veneration. This took place under the Emperor Constantine the Great (306-337) after his victory in the year 312 over Maxentius, ruler of the Western part of the Roman empire, and over Licinius, ruler of its Eastern part. In the year 323 Constantine became the sole ruler of the vast Roman Empire.

In 313 he had issued the Edict of Milan, by which the Christian religion was legalized and the persecutions against Christians in the Western half of the empire were stopped. The ruler Licinius, although he had signed the Edict of Milan to oblige Constantine, still fanatically continued the persecutions against Christians. Only after his conclusive defeat did the 313

Con't Page 9

The True Beginning of our Salvation

by Fr. Lawrence Farley

If one didn't know better, one might guess that our salvation started with the birth of Christ at Bethlehem. After all, that was when the eternal Word took flesh and was born among us for our salvation. But since we keep the Great Feast of the Nativity of the Theotokos, we do know better, and recognize that our salvation really began not with the birth of Jesus, but with the birth of Mary. For so momentous an event as the birth of God in the flesh and the union of heaven with earth and of eternity with time, some advance preparation needed to be done. It was not as if nine months or so before the divinely scheduled birth of Christ God looked around Nazareth and said to Himself, "Hmm. Who can I get to be His Mother? Let's see now—Mary seems to be a nice girl; she'll do." Mary was not a last-minute choice, chosen more or less at random. Like all the persons intimately connected with the events of salvation history, she was chosen at birth and prepared all her life for her divine role.

That was how God always worked. Thus Jeremiah was consecrated for his task as a prophet to the nations before he was born (Jeremiah 1:5), and Paul was set apart from his mother's womb for his ministry as apostle to the Gentiles (Galatians 1:15), and John the Forerunner was filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother's womb (Luke 1:15). Given this divine *modus operandi*, can we seriously believe that the person chosen to bear, teach, and raise the incarnate Son of God was chosen casually at the last minute? No! Like saints before and after her, her birth and formation were planned and part of the world's salvation. When Gabriel was finally sent to her with the annunciation tidings that she had been chosen to be mother to the Messiah, he did not need to hold his breath waiting to see whether or not she would accept the tidings and say, "Let it be to me according to your word." She had been literally born for the job, and everything in her young life had been leading to that moment. God began to save us even before the birth at Bethlehem—His work really began with the birth of Mary.

Mary's spiritual formation from her birth teaches us that what God wanted for the Incarnation was not simply the physical female anatomy necessary for birth-giving, but a real mother, in every sense of the word. Jesus' birth marked not the end of her Christmas work, but only its beginning. For Christ came not just to take a body, but to take a family—a mother, a father, and extended brothers ("extended", because they were not the children of Mary). It was this family that remained with Him to the end and remained in Jerusalem with the Twelve awaiting the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:14). It was this family that became transfigured and transformed by the Holy Spirit to become the Church. It is this family which we also join through holy baptism. For the Church is the family of Christ, and all who do the will of the Father are Christ's mother, brothers, and sisters (Mark 3:35).

The nativity of the Theotokos begins the Church year by reminding us that our salvation consists of joining this family, of which Mary is the mother. God began the work of saving and re-creating the world by first creating this little girl. Her birth promised new birth for everyone, and her young newborn crying announced the good news that salvation was almost here.

Fr. John Behr appointed to Met. Kallistos Chair of Orthodox Theology

YONKERS, NY [SVOTS Communications]: The Amsterdam Center for Orthodox Theology [ACOT] recently announced that the Executive Board of Vrije Universiteit [VU] has appointed the Archpriest John Behr, Dean of Saint Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary and Professor of Patristics, to its newly established Metropolitan Kallistos Chair of Orthodox Theology. In this part-time position, Father John will visit Amsterdam and work at VU a number of times each year as he continues his work at Saint Vladimir's Seminary. As a VU professor he also will be able to supervise doctoral students.

"Besides excellent academic qualifications, Father John brings with him great experience in educating students of diverse backgrounds in an international context," said Priest Michael Bakker, ACOT Director. "Our students will serve their communities in a pluralist society, and they need to be able to reflect critically on their own faith."

There are an estimated 190,000 Dutch residents with an Orthodox Christian background, approximately 55,000 of whom represent the Oriental tradition—Armenians, Copts, and Ethiopians.

"In 2015, the Dutch Minister of Education decided to grant VU a special budget to educate clergy for these growing churches," Father Michael explained. "At the time of Father John's inaugural lecture at VU on Friday, January 13, 2017, details will be provided about ACOT's Orthodox programs."

Professor Wim Janse, Dean of ACOT's Faculty of Theology, added that "a full and dedicated chair in Orthodox Theology broadens and enriches our academic horizon."

Father John received his doctorate in 1995 from the University of Oxford after being supervised by Metropolitan Kallistos Ware. His doctoral work, which examined issues of asceticism and anthropology, focused on Saints Irenaeus of Lyons and Clement of Alexandria and was published by Oxford University Press. Father John also founded the Formation of Christian Theology series at Saint Vladimir's Seminary Press, which includes his books *The Way to Nicaea* and *The Nicene Faith*. His subsequent book, *The Mystery of Christ: Life in Death*, synthesized those studies. More recently, Father John published a poetic, meditative work titled *Becoming Human: Theological Anthropology in Word and Image*, and a detailed study titled *Saint Irenaeus of Lyons: Identifying Christianity*. He has completed a new edition and translation of Origen's *On First Principles*. Currently he is working on a new edition and translation of the works of Saint Irenaeus of Lyons and on a book on the Gospel of Saint John.